

Region 1 FY 2015 Invasive Species Control Program Proposal Format

Please provide 2-page proposals addressing the following criteria:

Refuge/complex name: William L Finley/ Willamette Valley NWRC

Project title: Blackberry Control

Total amount requested: \$24,500

Project description: Himalayan Blackberry has become a substantial threat to large expanses of open oak savanna habitat on Finley NWR. While mowing and burning help to keep it at bay, these control methods rarely kill the plant. Carefully timed herbicide application combined with mowing and burning has been found to kill the plant, returning the habitat to primarily herbaceous. Out of the 775 of acres that contain blackberry, approximately 320 acres were treated in 2014. This proposal would fund a spring follow-up on previously treated acres as well as add up to 350 new acres to the list of treated areas. Meadow knapweed would also be added as a target while covering upland areas for blackberry. Native seed will be distributed in heavily infested areas to discourage establishment of other weeds in disturbed areas.

Comment [BF1]: This is actually the distinct project with well-defined objectives here. 10 points.

Distinct project with well-defined objectives (10 points): In addition to normal refuge IPM activities, this project would allow for a private contractor to work full time on two invasive species for multiple weeks at two intervals in the growing season. It is supported in the CCP by Goal 4, Objective 4a, Strategy 1: Implement effective measures against invasive species, such as herbicide treatment, as needed to reduce, control or eliminate invasive plants. It would also correlate directly to recovery actions identified in the Recovery Plan for the Prairie Species of Western Oregon and SW Washington as well as compliment work done previously through the Cooperative Recovery Initiative. Priority areas are chosen based on quality of native habitats, presence of listed plants or wildlife, and potential for prescribed fire within the units treated.

Potential for maximum control/Likelihood of success (10 points): There is potential for large amounts of blackberry to be eradicated with these efforts. Permanent control will require multiple treatments both this year and in following years. Effort in subsequent years will be greatly reduced by eliminating larger patches producing seed and allow for easier maintenance with smaller plants made more easily accessible.

Comment [BF2]: 10 points.

Biological benefit to priority species or BIDEH (10 points): Multiple species would benefit from this work, including 3 listed upland prairie species (golden paintbrush, Willamette daisy and Kincaid's lupine) and two wet prairie listed species (Bradshaw's lomatium and Nelson's checkermallow). By removing invasive woody blackberry, the open prairie is allowed to return to an herbaceous plant community, which directly impacts insect production, benefitting migratory and nesting songbirds. Parts of Pigeon Butte being restored to native upland prairie will be treated, creating habitat for newly transplanted Fender's blue butterfly. This proposal will result in significant increases of high quality oak savanna/upland prairie and promote healthy populations of listed species as the refuge works towards recovery plan goals.

Comment [BF3]: How is more prairie beneficial in more general terms, for more common trust species? 7.5

Sustainability (10 points): Additional follow-up will be required as seed sources for this particular plant are abundant. By initiating an aggressive attack, the hope is that minimal efforts will be needed on an annual basis to maintain the results of this initial effort. These treatments will become part of refuge operations, prioritized on a basis of prairies with listed species or the highest value plant communities.

Comment [BF4]: This sounds wonderful. 8 points only because it's blackberry.

Monitoring to document and evaluate project success (10 points): Infested areas will be identified and documented. Surveys will be conducted to monitor regrowth of the plant after an initial treatment and the need for multiple treatments will be determined by presence of new growth.

Comment [BF5]: How so?

Budget:

Herbicide applications will be a combination of FWS staff and contractors.

Contract spray crew	\$20,000
Refuge salary (spraying, mowing)	3,000
Chemical/application equipment	1,000
Native seed for treated areas	<u>500</u>
Total	\$24,500

Refuge Point of Contact: Damien Miller, Project Leader (541-757-7236)
or Molly Monroe, Asst. Refuge Biologist